

NUMBER OF ANIMALS USED IN INVASIVE EXPERIMENTS IN AUSTRALIA REACHES AN ALL TIME LOW

Humane Research Australia – the only organization to collate national statistics on animals used in research from each state department – is pleased to reveal that the latest figures (from 2016) show a significant reduction in animals used in invasive research.

Looking at the total figures published can make it difficult to see a clear picture of animal use – particularly when not all states make their statistics publicly available – however a closer analysis of those figures which are available show that the number of animals used (excluding those used in observational studies) has, for the first time in the last ten years of gathering information, been under 2 million.

The information provided by state department reports show varying degrees of severity. The category **“Observation involving minor interference”** has as its definition: *“Animals are not interacted with, or, where there is interaction, it would not be expected to compromise the animal’s welfare any more than normal handling, feeding, etc. There is no pain or suffering involved.”*

By excluding those animals used in this category, the number of animals used in 2016 totals 1.8 million, which is a reduction of 21.85% (or just over half a million individual animals) from the previous year.

Helen Marston, CEO, Humane Research Australia: *“We need to make it clear, that 1.8 million animals used in experimentation is 1.8 million too many, and HRA will continue opposing all harmful animal experiments, however it is heartening to witness substantial progress toward reaching zero.”*

The reduction coincides with further positive data obtained through a recent public opinion poll, which showed growing awareness of animal experiments. 71% of respondents are now aware that animal experiments occur in Australia - an increase from 57% in our 2013 survey – and fewer believe that animals are necessary for the development of human medicine than shown in previous years.

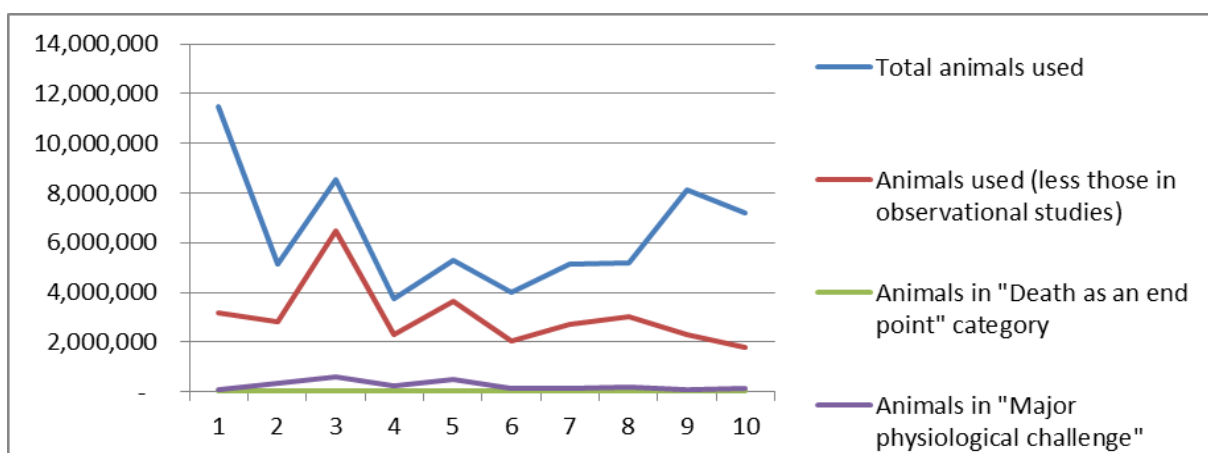
The shift in research focus is also encouraged by confirmation from the South Australian Minister for Environment and Water, the Hon. David Speirs, that his government would be establishing an annual research scholarship of \$25,000 to fund university research into discovering alternatives to animal testing. And the Animal Research Review Panel in NSW now includes in its Animal Research Review Panel Strategic Plan July 2017 – June 2020 - *“4.4 Promote consideration of funding for development and validation of alternatives”*

Helen Marston: *“The extrapolation of data from animals to humans can be dangerously misleading due to anatomic, genetic and metabolic differences. It is therefore not the most efficacious method of medical research. Australia should be investing in the development and validation of more humane and scientifically valid research methods – as occurs in Europe and the United States.*

“Today’s researchers carry a huge responsibility. Their work affects a great many lives – not only those animals they may choose or choose not to use – but many terminally-ill human patients who are looking toward cures. They don’t care whether a cancer drug works on a mouse, or diabetes can be cured in a monkey. These ongoing promises only taunt them with false hope. These people need real cures. Unfortunately this will not happen unless we let go of antiquated methodologies that rely on data from a different species. It is pleasing to see that these latest findings suggest Australia might finally be heading in the right direction.” **Marston concluded.**

The figures:

Year	Total animals used	Animals used (less those in observational studies)	Animals in "Death as an end point" category	Animals in "Major physiological challenge" category	Includes:
2007	11,482,441	3,174,763	26,568	108,550	6 states - Vic, NSW, SA, Tas, ACT & WA
2008	5,116,787	2,828,429	26,198	320,862	5 states - Vic, NSW, SA, Tas. & ACT
2009	8,522,635	6,474,744	31,789	590,533	7 states - Vic, NSW, SA, Tas, Qld, ACT & NT
2010	3,729,865	2,287,512	59,728	265,773	4 states - Vic, NSW, SA & Tas.
2011	5,271,911	3,644,468	27,470	515,292	4 states - Vic, NSW, SA & Tas.
2012	3,988,916	2,037,473	37,825	148,741	4 states - Vic, NSW, SA & Tas.
2013	5,153,296	2,727,341	29,287	134,329	5 states - Vic, NSW, SA, Tas. & WA
2014	5,195,329	3,015,366	26,397	189,334	4 states - Vic, NSW, Tas. & WA
2015	8,130,937	2,304,186	24,920	108,752	4 states - Vic, NSW, Tas. & WA
2016	7,216,611	1,800,628	22,689	115,663	4 states - Vic, NSW, Tas. & WA



A look at the states (where available):

Year	Vic	NSW	SA	Tas	WA
2007	782,871	769,895		80,272	
2008	899,733	1,648,925		64,898	
2009	1,596,607	1,223,784		108,978	
2010	1,061,305	886,157		80,985	
2011	2,638,792	1,000,689		77,123	
2012	793,311	1,016,721		58,510	
2013	708,624	1,423,031		100,284	336,912
2014	673,080	1,927,817		174,558	239,717
2015	736,654	1,332,564		57,770	177,198
2016	626,185	947,057		56,160	141,226

